



Bruins 3, Penguins 4, Final

States pushing abortion legislation rank poorly when it comes to child well-being

By [Matt Rocheleau](#) Globe Staff, Updated May 18, 2019, 9:30 a.m.



Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, after signing an abortion restriction bill into law in her state this week, said, "We must give every person the best chance for a quality life and a promising future." HAL YEAGER/ALABAMA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS/ALABAMA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE VIA AP

In states that have recently enacted, or are seriously considering, bills to restrict abortion, lawmakers pushing for the changes have often said they're motivated by wanting to help children, the most vulnerable members of society.

Louisiana Senator John Milkovich, a Democrat, said he brought that state's so-called fetal heartbeat bill, which is now under consideration, "to protect children," according to the [Associated Press](#).

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, after signing an [abortion restriction bill](#) into law in her state this week, [said](#), "We must give every person the best chance for a quality life and a promising future."

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp at a bill signing last week said, according to [CBS News](#): "We protect the innocent, we champion the vulnerable, we stand up and speak for those that are unable to speak for themselves."

Yet data show that many of the [states advancing legislation to restrict abortion](#) do a poor job of supporting children, in terms of economic well-being, education, health, and family and community.

The states rank below average, and in some cases place among the very worst, nationally when it comes to child well-being, according to metrics the nonpartisan Annie E. Casey Foundation's [Kids Count Data Center](#) has tracked for the past three decades.

The center compiles statistics from the Census Bureau, the Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other sources to rank states on 16 measures across four sectors. It uses that information to rank how states perform overall on child well-being.

Among 10 states that have recently enacted or are seriously considering bills to restrict abortion, all but one are in the bottom half nationally, including three that fall in the bottom 10: Louisiana ranks 49th, Mississippi is 48th, and

Alabama is 42nd in the nation.

Not far behind are: West Virginia at 40th, Georgia at 39th, South Carolina at 38th, Kentucky at 37th, and Tennessee at 35th.

The highest-ranked of the bunch are Ohio, which misses the bottom half by the slimmest margin, placing 25th nationally, and [Missouri](#), at 26th.

The abortion debate has [caught fire this week](#) with new states passing [abortion restrictions](#), including a near-total ban in Alabama.

That state's new law bans abortion at any stage of pregnancy, without exceptions for rape and incest but with an exception for when a pregnancy creates a serious health risk for a woman.

Under the law, doctors could be charged with a felony for performing the procedure and face decades in prison.

Alabama Representative John Rogers and other Democratic legislators in that state have criticized majority Republicans for not allocating enough public resources to care for children after they're born, according to the [Montgomery Advertiser](#).

Rogers told the newspaper recently: "We have a state that's not taken Medicaid expansion. We've got a state that's saying that you've got to be drug-tested before you get food stamps . . . Two murders a day in prison. And yet we still want to talk about abortion."

"They're pro-birth but not pro-life," he said. "You can't have it both ways."

In addition to saying they are acting to protect children, abortion opponents have cited religious beliefs as a reason for the flurry of new bills, which may challenge *Roe v. Wade*. State Representative Terri Collins of Alabama said, according to *The New York Times*, lawmakers were acting out of the “deeply held belief that every life is precious and that every life is a sacred gift from God.”

How states pushing abortion restrictions rank on child well-being

The nonpartisan Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Kids Count Data Center has tracked child well-being data for the past three decades. The center compiles statistics from the Census Bureau, the Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other sources to rank states on 16 measures across the four sectors below. It also uses that information to rank how states perform overall. The figures below show where each state ranks among the 50 states.

States	Overall	Economic Well-Being	Education	Health	Family & Community
Alabama	42	38	42	37	43
Georgia	39	37	34	39	40
Kentucky	37	40	29	28	39
Louisiana	49	50	47	44	48
Mississippi	48	48	44	47	50
Missouri	26	14	23	33	28
Ohio	25	22	16	23	31
South Carolina	38	34	41	36	37
Tennessee	35	33	35	27	38
West Virginia	40	47	39	35	35

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center

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